



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism*

The representation of Islamic values within *Sang Piatu* folktale in Kedurang society

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ABSTRACT

Folktales contain various life values that society can emulate. Through folktales, readers or listeners can enhance their cognitive abilities and character. The Sang Piatu folktale from the Kedurang offers a range of knowledge and important values to be taught. This research aims to analyze the Islamic values in the folktale of Sang Piatu and the community's perspective on the existence of this tale in conveying Islamic education. This research is qualitative method. The results of this study indicate that the folktale of Sang Piatu provides Islamic values, namely, morals and etiquette that are very important to be taught to children, such as the obligation to perform prayers, the habit of giving alms, the activity of reciting the Quran, and the habit of maintaining ablution and worshipping at the mosque. Islamic behavior is also demonstrated in the tale of Sang Piatu, such as loving parents, respecting others, and helping one another. From the community's perspective, the tale of Sang Piatu is conveyed using storytelling techniques accompanied by reviews of the goodness within so children will understand the values contained in the story. This research has a positive impact on shaping the behavior of children to practice Islamic teachings in real life.

KEYWORDS: Islamic values, Sang Piatu, Folktale

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Introduction

Folktales are a portrait of the life of society, both in the past and present. Folktales contain many life values that are undoubtedly very important to be conveyed to young people in today's era. These values reflect habits, religion, behavior, and culture, which are helpful as strategic efforts to convey moral messages and religious teachings to young people. Through folktales, children understand cultural elements, religious values, and virtues that are important to be implemented in real life. To maximize this, the role of parents and teachers is necessary. Parents can teach their children the values in the stories, while teachers can instill these values through character education based on local culture during classroom learning because education is a conscious and planned effort that is applied to shape the character of a child who is characteristically and adheres to Islamic values in daily life (Ikhwan, et al., 2019).

Islamic values are often found in folktales. The folktale of Sang Piatu among the Pasemah ethnic group in Kedurang contains many Islamic values that are ideal to be used as an educational tool regarding Islamic values, thereby creating religious children. These Islamic values can be found in story excerpts that depict the behavior of characters, dialogues between characters, and descriptions of characters in the folktale. In the story of Sang Piatu, it is portrayed that a child diligently prays and recites the Quran, which represents Islamic values that young people should emulate. Adults, especially parents, need to tell the touching story of Sang Piatu to strengthen children's faith. The Islamic values in the story can serve as a source of knowledge for children of the Pasemah ethnic group in Kedurang.

The researchers have conducted a series of interviews and field observations, focusing on the Pasemah ethnic community residing in Kedurang. These qualitative methods were chosen to deeply understand how traditional folktales, especially the story of *Sang Piatu*, are perceived and transmitted within the community. These field observations reveal that the oral storytelling tradition remains vibrant in Kedurang. Many parents, particularly elders, are still proficient in narrating local folktales and are actively involved in passing them down to younger generations. This suggests that storytelling continues to play a central role in shaping the values, beliefs, and cultural identity of the Pasemah people. One important aspect that emerged from the study is the community's belief in the educational power of the folktale of *Sang Piatu*. According to local perspectives, this tale is a source of entertainment and a meaningful vehicle for transmitting religious and moral teachings, particularly those rooted in Islamic principles. The community regards the story as rich in wisdom and moral guidance, making it highly suitable for educating children and young people about their religious duties and ethical conduct. This view is strongly supported by the results of interviews conducted with the informant.

"The tale of Sang Piatu is highly relevant as a means of Islamic religious education for children here because the story conveys the life of an orphan who is diligent in worship. The story of Sang Piatu contains many Islamic values, such as the obligation of prayer, the importance of reciting the Quran, performing ablution, and even going on Hajj."

His statement highlights the community's appreciation for the story's potential to instill Islamic values from a young age. The character of Sang Piatu serves as an exemplary role model for children, showcasing discipline, devotion, and moral behavior—all of which align with the teachings of Islam. This perception is further echoed by another informant, A, who emphasized that the tale of *Sang Piatu* holds many virtues, particularly about Islamic values. According to A, Sang Piatu's character embodies the ideal traits of a devout child—diligent in prayer, respectful toward elders, and committed to learning religious knowledge. These characteristics are seen as essential qualities that children in the community are encouraged to emulate.

Given the strong presence of Islamic elements within the story and the community's trust in its educational value, the researchers were inspired to delve deeper into this cultural artifact. This led to the decision to examine the representation of Islamic values in the folktale of *Sang Piatu*, particularly how these values are understood, interpreted, and transmitted among the Pasemah ethnic group in Kedurang. The study seeks to explore the representation of Islamic values in Sang Piatu folktales in Kedurang.

Literature Review

Islamic Values

Islamic values are integral topics within Islamic societies, influencing personal and organizational life. Emphasizing these values can lead to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations alike (Zein et al., 2022). There are three primary types of values in Islam: (a) *akhlāq*, which encompasses the duties and responsibilities outlined in the *shari'ah* and Islamic teachings in general; (b) *adab*, which pertains to the manners related to proper upbringing; and (c) the character traits of a good Muslim (Supriyatno et al., 2021). In Islam, values encompass everything Allah has deemed good, accurate, and beneficial. The primary sources and references for these Islamic values are the Quran and Hadith (Zubir et al., 2019). Also, it can be argued that instilling self-concept, moral, and religious values should begin at an early age to ensure that these principles are deeply ingrained in Indonesian children (Hidayati, 2019). Islamic values are grounded in the concept of *tawhid* (the oneness of God), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of life—moral, social, economic, and spiritual. These values stress the importance of justice, compassion, and the pursuit of knowledge. The ethical teachings of Islam are meant to guide individuals not only in their personal conduct but also in fostering a just and harmonious society (Armstrong, 2000). Islamic values are deeply embedded in the principles of equity, justice, and compassion, which form the core of Islamic teachings. The concept of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) leads to a holistic worldview where moral conduct, social justice, and spiritual development are interconnected. These values guide Muslims not only in their personal lives but also in their interactions with others and in addressing societal issues (Esposito, 2011).

Furthermore, Islamic religious education is a highly suitable and crucial approach for shaping the behavior and personality of children and teenagers. It also plays a vital role in helping teenagers navigate life's challenges. Additionally, the contributions of the family, school, and community are essential in fostering the behavior of teenagers (Tsoraya et al., 2022). Islamic values are a fundamental element in shaping the character of Muslim individuals, especially among the younger generation. Islamic character education does not rely solely on cognitive development but integrates spiritual and social aspects rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Hafizah found that the implementation of student life regulations in Islamic-based schools can effectively foster the internalization of religious values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility (Hafizah, 2025). Meanwhile, emphasize the importance of theological and philosophical approaches in using Islam as a value foundation for shaping social character focusing on principles such as brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), proper manners (*adab*), and trustworthiness (*amanah*) (Tanjung et al., 2025). As Ali (2003) points out, Islamic values emphasize principles such as justice, compassion, and humility, which form the foundation for social harmony and ethical behavior in Muslim communities. These values are deeply ingrained in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, which provide guidance for personal conduct and societal well-being. Islamic values, such as the importance of charity, patience, and respect for others, play a critical role in fostering social cohesion and moral integrity within Muslim societies (Kettani, 2013).

Folktales

Older age groups have often used folktales to guide and mold behavioral patterns in children (Olugbemi-Gabriel & Ukpi, 2022). The value of folktales in traditional society cannot be overemphasized. This significant genre of traditional literature plays a significant role in imparting society's educational, traditional, cultural, religious, and social ideologies to growing children (Amali, 2014). According to Propp (1968), folktales consist of distinct actions performed by humans, objects, and animals. Wundt elaborates that folk narratives encompass many tales, including mythical, fairy, biological, animal-related, genealogical, and humorous stories. These narratives communicate the norms and values, as well as the do's and don'ts, within a given story. A folktale, as a form of oral literature, draws its material from the realities of society and hence reflects people's values and worldviews (Sone, 2018). Indonesia has many kinds of folktales as cultural heritages that must be preserved. A folktale provides cultural knowledge and moral values as one type of literary text (Fadhli, 2020). As societal values change, folktales must be adjusted and amended (Citraningtyas, Clara Evi, Rudy Pramono, 2014). Folktales from convey moral messages such as hard work, honesty, social responsibility, environmental care, and Islamic principles like trustworthiness, compassion, and cooperation (Irlina & Khairunnisa, 2024).

Method

This study used a qualitative approach. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), qualitative research involves collecting descriptive information through verbal or written expressions from individuals and observable behaviors. Initially, the researchers conducted observations, interviews, and documentation with the Pasemah ethnic community in Kedurang to gather information about the folktale of Sang Piatu and the community's perspective on the Islamic values within the story. Every obtained information was recorded and documented, resulting in data transcription in the form of the folktale of Sang Piatu. The tale was then analyzed for its Islamic values. Excerpts found within the story were compared with community opinions gathered from interviews, observational findings, and documentary studies. This data was subsequently interpreted based on Islamic values theory. The interpretation results were presented and further examined in the discussion section.

To obtain valid and reliable information, the researchers established specific criteria to select the informants involved in the study carefully. These criteria were essential to ensure that the data collected reflected authentic and accurate insights into the local culture and traditions. The informants had to be individuals of Pasemah ethnicity who were born and raised in Kedurang and had never migrated or lived in other regions for extended periods. This requirement was set to guarantee that their understanding and experiences were deeply rooted in the local context. In addition, the selected informants were required to have a thorough knowledge of Kedurang's language, customs, and cultural practices, allowing them to provide comprehensive and nuanced information about the community's values and stories.

Furthermore, the researchers ensured that informants were physically and mentally healthy, enabling them to participate effectively in the interview and data collection processes without obstacles. Another crucial criterion was their willingness to serve as sources of information openly, honestly, and with full cooperation. Informants had to be ready to share their experiences and knowledge sincerely and without withholding relevant details. As a result of this careful selection process, the chosen informants had a strong connection to Kedurang and a profound understanding of its cultural heritage. They were respected community members who had lived in the area their entire lives and had firsthand familiarity with the oral traditions passed down through generations. Their insights were invaluable, particularly regarding the folktale of *Sang Piatu*, as they were deeply aware of the narrative's moral values, symbolic meanings, and social functions. These individuals were knowledgeable about the story itself, the context in which it was traditionally told, its relevance in community life, and the lessons it aimed to instill. Their willingness to contribute to the research ensured that the data collected was rich, meaningful, and reflective of the cultural reality of Kedurang.

Result and Discussion

The Folktale of Sang Piatu

The folktale of Sang Piatu is part of the hypothetical folktales in the Pasemah ethnic group in Kedurang, Bengkulu. Sang Piatu is one of the characters in the folktales found in the Kedurang community in South Bengkulu. Sang Piatu is a term used for a child who has no parents. In the folktales of the Kedurang community, Sang Piatu is depicted as a boy. He is called Sang Piatu because he has no parents. Sang Piatu lives with his grandmother in a simple house on the forest's edge. They live modestly and love each other. Most of the community is familiar with and knows the story of Sang Piatu. The story of Sang Piatu is very familiar to the community. This is because Sang Piatu presents a touching story about an orphaned child with commendable behavior. The positive impression of Sang Piatu's story leaves the community amazed.

As part of the *andai-andai* folktales, the story of Sang Piatu contains many good values that children can internalize, especially Islamic values. *Andai-andai* folktales in Kedurang Society can be used as learning material for the literature subject in primary school because the central characters in those folktales are children and animals (Junaidi, 2017). The *andai-andai* folktales have many good values in building harmony and relationships to educate children to be better in morality and character (Cahyani & Junaidi, 2019). Similarly, Sang Piatu's story teaches children the importance of practicing religious teachings, not only the obligation of worship. The story of Sang Piatu illustrates a child's role within the family. Ideally, children diligently practice religious teachings, have compassion for their parents, enjoy helping their parents with household chores, are courteous, and are eager to learn. These characters are reflected in Sang Piatu. He deeply loves his grandmother and obeys his elders, especially his teacher. From Sang Piatu, children must understand that besides performing

prayers and reciting the Quran, they must practice Islamic attitudes in real life. Religious commandments are not just formalities but must be practiced in real actions at home, school, and in the community.

Islamic Values in Sang Piatu

Islamic values are depicted in the folktale of Sang Piatu in his activities of praying at the mosque, reciting the Quran, showing gratitude, aspiring to go on Hajj, and his obedient behavior towards his grandmother and eagerness to assist her. The following quote demonstrates Sang Piatu's enthusiasm for learning the Quran.

“Sang Piatu lives in a village with his grandmother. They live a simple life. One day, Sang Piatu asked permission to learn the Quran from his grandmother. His grandmother was very pleased. She allowed Sang Piatu to learn the Quran on the condition that he must be diligent and serious.”

The quote depicts the close relationship between Sang Piatu and his grandmother and the importance of religious education in their lives. Sang Piatu lives with his grandmother in the village under humble circumstances, indicating they lead a modest life together. When Sang Piatu expresses his desire to learn the Quran, his grandmother is delighted and grants permission with the condition that he must be responsible, diligent, and serious in his studies. This illustrates the importance of discipline and determination in religious education and the loving relationship between Sang Piatu and his grandmother.

Furthermore, the quote reflects several core Islamic values through the relationship and actions of Sang Piatu and his grandmother. Sang Piatu's request to learn the Quran shows a strong personal desire to deepen his religious understanding, highlighting the value of seeking knowledge in Islam. His approach—asking for permission and accepting his grandmother's conditions—demonstrates respect, humility, and obedience, which are important aspects of Islamic teachings, especially in family relationships. The grandmother's positive response and emphasis on being diligent and earnest show how important discipline and sincerity are in religious practice. This also reflects her role in guiding and supporting Sang Piatu's spiritual growth. Their simple life suggests contentment and gratitude, values appreciated in Islam, where spiritual richness is considered more meaningful than material wealth. The warm and respectful interaction between Sang Piatu and his grandmother also emphasizes the importance of close family bonds and mutual care, which are essential in maintaining harmony and fostering good character.

Sang Piatu's habit of reciting the Quran in the afternoon portrays children in Kedurang, both in the past and present, who often go to the mosque. Until now, children in Kedurang are still many who learn the Quran in the mosque. They go together to study. This is carried out in almost all villages. Thus, most children can already recite the Quran and perform prayers. The existence of this goodness persists until now. Learning the Quran is highly relevant to the story of Sang Piatu. Many good habits in the story of Sang Piatu are practiced by children in real life within the community. Islamic values in the tale of Sang Piatu can be seen in the following excerpt:

“Sang Piatu went to the village to learn Quran recitation. His teacher gladly accepted him. His teacher asked him to come early. He was also asked to prepare water in the mosque so others could perform ablution.”

Utilizing mosques for religious education and Quranic study sessions, known as Mengaji, can be enhanced to serve the broader community, benefiting everyone (Fathoni, 2017). The above excerpt explicitly conveys Sang Piatu's enthusiasm for learning to recite the Quran. This reflects Islamic values demonstrated in the character's behavior. Reciting the Quran is one of the acts of worship in Islam. Reciting the Quran is a noble act ideally performed by all practicing Muslims. It is a skill. The process of reciting the Quran proficiently is not short. Sang Piatu, in the above excerpt, reflects Islamic behavior that Pasemah ethnic children should emulate in real life.

Moreover, the excerpt above states, “he was also asked to prepare water in the mosque so that others could perform ablution.” This sentence is evidence of Sang Piatu's devotion to his teacher and the community. He obeyed his teacher's command to prepare water, thus arriving early. Obedience to teachers is a reflection of Islamic behavior that is important to practice in daily life. Children nowadays must be taught the importance of obeying their teachers' commands. This sentence also indicates that Sang Piatu is beneficial to the community.

He prepared water so that others could perform ablution. This is a commendable action because a good human being benefits others in Islam. Providing ample water certainly facilitates the community coming to the mosque to perform ablution before they pray. The proximity of Islamic principles within an individual motivates people to willingly participate in diverse activities at the Mosque (Andhani et al., 2024).

Faith in human life is essential. By increasing one's piety, that person's life will be calmer and more peaceful, able to understand negative and positive emotions, and able to manage their emotions well (Wijaya et al., 2024). Sang Piatu's perseverance in seeking religious knowledge is a good example for children that can be applied in community life because seeking knowledge is part of the important teachings of Islam that need to be understood. Seeking religious knowledge is a good deed performed by Sang Piatu, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

"After finishing reciting the Quran, Sang Piatu always went home last. His teacher asked him to go home last. He was always taught how to do prayers by his teacher at that last moment while others had already gone home."

Sang Piatu's diligence in seeking religious knowledge is reflected in the above excerpt. He willingly went home last to learn how to pray from his teacher. His enthusiasm for learning and his way of respecting his teacher are reflections of a child with noble character. He diligently teaches religious knowledge by utilizing quiet time in the mosque because others have already gone home earlier. Not only that, Sang Piatu is also known as a perfect child who cares deeply for his grandmother. This indicates that a child who learns religious knowledge will become a caring individual who respects elders. Sang Piatu learns religious knowledge and shows respect toward elders, which he applies daily to his grandmother, causing her to care for him deeply. They live harmoniously and love each other dearly. Diligence in studying religious knowledge is a behavior that children in the real world should emulate. Children need to understand that studying religious knowledge should be done with sincerity.

The excerpt highlights the Islamic value of perseverance in seeking knowledge, especially religious knowledge, as seen through Sang Piatu's consistent effort to stay behind after Quran recitation to learn how to pray. His willingness to go home late shows a strong sense of dedication and commitment, qualities encouraged in Islam. This persistence also reflects self-discipline, a key characteristic in developing a Muslim's faith and character. Sang Piatu's respect for his teacher—staying behind quietly and learning attentively—demonstrates another important Islamic value: *adab* (good manners) towards teachers and those who share knowledge. His behavior shows that he seeks knowledge and does so with humility and proper conduct.

Sang Piatu in Society's Perspectives

Sang Piatu is widely known as a very good person. He is recognized as a kind child who loves his grandmother. Despite not receiving affection from his parents since childhood, he continues to lead a self-reliant and happy life. His grandmother raised him. Sang Piatu is an orphan who was cared for and brought up modestly by his grandmother. The community is deeply impressed by Sang Piatu's independence and kindness. Even though only present in folk tales, the character of Sang Piatu is very close to the lives of the Pasemah ethnic community in Kedurang.

In addition to data in the form of excerpts from the folktale of Sang Piatu, researchers investigated the community's perspective on the role of the Sang Piatu story as a tool for Islamic education for Pasemah ethnic children in Kedurang. Researchers analyzed data from interviews with the informants. Most informants said the Sang Piatu story is known for its Islamic values. The character of Sang Piatu is very close to community life. He represents a very diligent boy in worship who actively goes to the mosque. Sang Piatu is excellent as an example for children in Kedurang that a child living in a village should continue to strive to learn to achieve their dreams even if they do not have parents. It is not just about worship; Sang Piatu's perseverance in living with his grandmother is highly appreciated. He is so strong and enthusiastic to continue learning and helping his grandmother. This is as supported by the informant in the following quote:

"Sang Piatu is very good. He lives in the village with his grandmother because he has no parents. Even though he is only with his grandmother and living in poverty, he remains grateful for what he has. He is

very diligent about going to the mosque to pray. He fasts regularly. He is also very diligent about helping his grandmother with household chores, such as cooking and cleaning their house.

The quote above explains that Sang Piatu is not only a child who understands Islamic values but also has great affection for his grandmother. He is very diligent in helping his grandmother. The attitude of mutual love and respect for elders is also very good in Islam. Sang Piatu has both vertical and horizontal relationships. He obeys God's commands and maintains good relationships with others.

In Kedurang community life, children are expected to grow up hardworking and loving towards their parents. This is exemplified by Sang Piatu's behavior towards his grandmother. Children are expected to have good character and respect for others. Sang Piatu is an example of a good character who encourages children to have attitudes of diligence in worship, independence, and hard work. The informant also conveys Sang Piatu's character of being diligent in worship in the following quote:

"Sang Piatu is a boy who is good at being grateful. He never complains, even though he lives simply with his grandmother. He is thankful for every blessing he experiences. Sang Piatu diligently prays for his grandmother."

The quote above states that Sang Piatu practices Islamic teachings has a broad heart and is grateful. Gratitude for all the blessings given to humans reflects Islamic character. Gratitude proves that Sang Piatu is a religious child, so he does not blame his circumstances. He continues to do good and worship to make his life with his grandmother happy and peaceful.

The Islamic values of Sang Piatu are often conveyed to children in Kedurang. Many people used to emulate Sang Piatu's behavior toward children of the current generation. This aims to teach Islamic values to be more easily understood. Islamic advice is conveyed through stories to make children enthusiastic to listen, ultimately leading to daily application. The folktale of Sang Piatu as a tool for teaching Islamic values is conveyed by the informant as follows:

"The story of Sang Piatu is often told to children during leisure time, especially before bedtime. The goodness and diligence of Sang Piatu in worship are excellent role models as a learning source for children. Many people tell the story of Sang Piatu, making children touched. It would be better if there were books about the story of Sang Piatu so that children could read them."

The informant stated that the story of Sang Piatu is often told to children during leisure time. Children also respond well to the story. According to the informant, it would be better if children could access the Sang Piatu story directly. For example, storybooks about Sang Piatu are available so children in Kedurang can read them at home or school. Junaidi et al. (2022) state that folktales in learning can positively impact student intelligence development. Additionally, the content of Islamic values in Sang Piatu represents the habits of children in Kedurang, such as reciting the Quran at the mosque. This activity continues to this day. Children are very enthusiastic about going to the mosque to recite the Quran. They allocate time in the afternoon after returning from school. This activity is an example of practicing one of the Islamic values in real life. Furthermore, Children in Kedurang are also diligent in fasting, especially during Ramadan, as commanded by Islam. They are very enthusiastic about fasting as an effort to familiarize themselves with the obligations of being a Muslim.

Discussion

Education is a conscious and planned effort that is applied to shape the character of a child who is characteristically and adheres to Islamic values in daily life (Ikhwan, et al., 2019). The folktale of *Sang Piatu* plays a crucial role in transmitting Islamic values and moral teachings among the Pasemah ethnic community in Kedurang, Bengkulu. This traditional narrative is not merely a source of entertainment. Still, it functions as an effective pedagogical tool the community uses to instil ethical principles and religious virtues in the younger generation. The story's deep-rooted presence in oral tradition demonstrates its enduring relevance in shaping children's character through culturally embedded educational practices. At the heart of the folktale is the

character of Sang Piatu, a young boy who, despite being orphaned, embodies many praiseworthy qualities such as compassion, filial piety, religiosity, and perseverance. The depiction of Sang Piatu as a loving and obedient grandson who cares deeply for his grandmother underscores fundamental Islamic teachings concerning respect for elders and familial devotion. These values align closely with the moral imperatives found in Islamic doctrine, which emphasizes the importance of kindness to family members, especially caregivers and older people. In this context, the story serves as a vehicle for the intergenerational transmission of religious and ethical values. The practice of storytelling in Kedurang, known locally as *beandai-andai*, is a form of cultural expression sustained through generations. According to Junaidi et al. (2024), *bandai-andai* are instrumental in educating children by conveying folktales with moral and spiritual messages. This oral tradition entertains and fosters moral reflection and emotional intelligence, making it an indispensable component of the community's informal education system. The tradition represents an intersection between culture and religion, where Islamic values are seamlessly woven into the fabric of everyday life. Through stories that emphasize themes such as patience, humility, and compassion, children can internalize abstract moral principles more effectively. In this regard, *Sang Piatu* functions as a story and a strategic tool for character development within the family context. Parents act as moral agents, utilizing the story as a didactic instrument to foster ethical behaviour and religious observance among their children.

The narrative of *Sang Piatu* reflects a strong moral compass and religious dedication. Despite his hardships, Sang Piatu is portrayed as a diligent and devout boy. His routine includes helping his grandmother with daily chores and attending the local mosque to pray and study the Quran. His unwavering commitment to religious practices and his disciplined lifestyle make him an exemplary figure in the eyes of the community. His character encapsulates many of the core values encouraged in Islamic teachings, such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), and industriousness (*ijtihad*). Apriani et al. (2021), in their study of the folktale *Sang Piatu Becomes King*, identify thirteen-character values reflected in the narrative. These include religiosity, honesty, independence, curiosity, hard work, creativity, social concern, discipline, love for peace, appreciation of achievement, friendliness/communicativeness, environmental care, and responsibility. These values are expressed both explicitly and implicitly through the characters' dialogue and actions. The multiplicity of values in the story illustrates its richness as an educational resource and reaffirms its relevance in promoting holistic character education among children. The research by Apriani et al. is corroborated by further studies, such as that of Cipriani et al., which emphasize the moral and religious dimensions of *Sang Piatu*. The character's behaviour mirrors Islamic virtues and societal expectations—he is industrious, dutiful, and spiritually grounded. These attributes reflect the community's ideal vision of youth behaviour and highlight the folktale's role in cultivating a morally upright and socially responsible generation. Moreover, the internalization of these values through storytelling aligns with broader educational objectives in Islamic and national educational frameworks, particularly in developing moral reasoning and ethical sensitivity.

Moreover, religion is one of the most powerful social institutions, deeply connected to people's attitudes, values, and behaviors (Rafiki & Wahab, 2014). According to Haynes (2014), religion serves as a significant social force that shapes moral values, cultural norms, and individual behaviors within societies. These functions are evident in the *Sang Piatu* folktale, where Islamic teachings on patience, sincerity, and social solidarity are woven into the narrative, reinforcing ethical principles in the Kedurang community. The *Sang Piatu* folktale reflects how Islamic values are instrumental in shaping social behavior and maintaining community cohesion, aligning with the argument that religion provides a framework for social integration and moral regulation (Froese & Bader, 2010). As Putnam and Campbell (2010) emphasize, religious communities not only nurture personal faith but also foster social capital by encouraging civic engagement, trust, and mutual support. These dynamics are reflected in the *Sang Piatu* folktale, where Islamic teachings promote communal solidarity and ethical interaction in the Kedurang society. The role of religion in reinforcing ethical behavior and social norms is evident in the *Sang Piatu* narrative, consistent with the assertion that religious values shape collective morality and promote cooperation within communities (Stark & Finke, 2000). According to Norris and Inglehart (2011), religion offers existential security by providing answers to moral questions and social uncertainties, which in turn strengthens cultural continuity. Such functions are observable in the *Sang Piatu* folktale, where Islamic values guide both individual conduct and social harmony. The transmission of Islamic ethical values through the *Sang Piatu* folktale illustrates the broader pattern identified by Smidt (2003), where religion acts as a vehicle

for socialization and moral education across generations (Smidt, 2003). Ketupat Kandangan, a traditional Indonesian dish from South Kalimantan, also embodies the harmonious integration of Islamic values, cultural heritage, and economic sustainability in Banjar society (Zaki, et al., 2024).

Hadžić (2022) also reinforces the view that Islam strongly advocates for values such as compassion, philanthropy, and care for the vulnerable—qualities vividly exemplified in the character of Sang Piatu. Although fictional, the character has become a cultural symbol of virtuous behaviour within the Pasemah community. His influence transcends the confines of narrative, as many parents and educators invoke his example when teaching children how to navigate ethical dilemmas and cultivate religious discipline in everyday life. The folktale of *Sang Piatu* serves as a culturally embedded moral compass that guides the younger generation toward ethical and religious maturity. It represents a form of Indigenous pedagogy where storytelling acts as a conduit for value transmission, emotional development, and social learning. By preserving and promoting such folktales, communities like those in Kedurang ensure the continuity of cultural identity and the reinforcement of Islamic values in the lives of future generations.

Conclusion

This study successfully devises an empowerment model specifically tailored to millennial vegetable farmers in the highlands of West Java, with the goal of enhancing their competencies. The current competency levels have been analyzed, and the relationships between farmers' characteristics, environmental support, institutional backing, participation, and motivation have been examined. Significant roles of nearest environment support and motivation in shaping farmers' perceptions and competencies have been highlighted by the findings. This underscores the necessity for a supportive social framework and targeted interventions that foster intrinsic motivation and encourage active participation. While institutional support is recognized as important for shaping perceptions, its impact on competence is mediated by factors such as motivation and engagement. A comprehensive support system that integrates institutional assistance with strategies to boost motivation and involvement is advocated by the research. Valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners aiming to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of millennial farmers in vegetable farming have been offered by this study.

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